1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

cardamum fruit[10] at the time of harvest, and which some Lepchas hope will be converted into an elementary school. A little after this the track shoots sharply upwards, barely indicated by the presence of rocks and felled trees, running through poor and ragged stony ground sparsely sown with maize. The path leads directly to the crest of the hill which is surmounted by a small stone cairn or *choten*, perhaps three thousand feet above the river and five thousand above the sea-level. This cairn is almost opposite the junction of the Teesta and Talung rivers, and from it paths wander west and south, to the different villages of Zongu.

Proceeding westward from the cairn you reach in a couple of miles the small village of Panung; a couple more miles and you come to the village of Lingthem. Without our knowledge—we were only making for Zongu, and until the last hours believed that was the name of a village—it had been arranged that we were to stop there, and the first storey of the monastery had been placed at our disposal, in such a manner that it was almost impossible to refuse. As a place to live in the monastery suffered from several disadvantages; it was extremely cold and draughty, and fires were forbidden because the smoke would defile the images of the Gods; smoking was forbidden, except on the balcony which for my special benefit was temporarily considered outside holy precincts; the place was overrun with rats, which it would have been the greatest possible sin to kill in the monastery, and which could not be driven away supernaturally because none of the lamas knew the correct ritual, which involves the use of sand, ashes, and paper charms; there was never any privacy for at any time people might feel impelled to come to worship the images which were housed in this upper chamber, and regularly at dawn and sunset a young lama came to arrange the altars; and during big monastery feasts sleep was often impossible for two or three nights. But some of these disadvantages had compensating advantages; and as the focal centre of Lingthem, and to a lesser degree of the whole Talung side of Zongu, our living quarters were ideally situated for constant observation.

[10] Cardamum is the money crop of the Lepchas. Cardamum is a spice consisting of the seed-capsules of the perennial plants of a species of *Amomum* and is much used as a stomachic and condiment.

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on the part of the people I talked to; men may remember the names of their wives, and do know those of their daughters, but practically never those of any other married women. 551

Personal names are of practically no importance to the Lepchas of Zongu and they have no sort of permanence. On the third day after birth, when the lama casts the infant's horoscope, he will discover his 'sacred name'; but this is never spoken by anyone, merely inscribed on the horoscope; it is never used subsequently; and nobody knows their own sacred name. On the third-day birth feast one of the people present (usually an 'aunt' or the officiating Mun) will give the child some name; it may refer to some physical peculiarity (e.g. *Thyak Thimbu*—Big Head), to some incident which took place while the mother was carrying the child, or may just be the day of the week on which it was born. In the case of a child born after several previous children had died young, he or she is often given a deprecating name such as Peut, which means a wandering Tibetan beggar-monk, or Tafong, which means a manger. But these names are equally impermanent. As the child grows older anybody may give him a nickname; thus Kurma *gyapön* as an infant was named by an aunt Tayout; his mother called him Kurma because as a suckling he was bad tempered (people say *kur kur* to a cross child). As children grow up their nicknames increase; and a person's name is simply that which is used most often. Many people have two or three names of equal validity, a state of affairs which at the beginning caused me enormous confusion. Thus Peut, Chano's 'brother', was also called Chinya, Nariya Kochet, Serving Aving and so forth. Except for outsiders names are of very little importance; the householder in whose name the property is registered must keep that name in use; otherwise names are almost non-functional. 551 553 [852]

It occasionally happens that as part of the cure of an illness the lamas will order their patient to change his or her name for a year; in such cases a new nickname is provided. If the banned name is meaningful the word is not avoided in ordinary conversation. The names of dead siblings are never given to new-born children, and those of the recently dead very seldom. It occasionally happens that the lama finds from his horoscope that the new-born child is the reincarnation of a dead ancestor; even in such cases, though the situation is considered mildly auspicious, the child is not given the name it bore in the earlier incarnation. [755]

Names have a certain negative effect; a person should never 551

 784

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551 mention the names of his parents or parents-in-law; a man should never mention the name of those women he calls daughter-in-law 784 (that is the wives of his sons, of his younger brothers, and of his brother's sons), nor a woman the names of those men she calls 'son-in-law' (that is her daughter's husbands, her younger sisters' husbands, and the husbands of her sisters' daughters). These prohibitions hold good even after a person is dead; but here likewise there is no avoidance of the same or similar-sounding words in ordinary conversation. To call a person by name, rather than [576] by their title or a kinship term is considered to be somewhat ill-mannered; it has the same effect as though one were treating him as a child or inferior. In Europe a parallel situation is created when a stranger is immediately addressed by his or her Christian name; it is classing that person as a child or a servant.

601 It is difficult to gauge the emotional weight which is carried by terms primarily employed in the immediate family when they are applied to more distant connections. My impression is that the use of such terms as 'mother' and 'father' does carry, and is intended to carry, some of the emotional attitudes derived from the original application of the terms. No child who was able to talk had any doubt as to who were his real father and mother, but many would say 'I have two mothers; my real mother is little mother.'

601 Among the Lepchas the crucial situation arises when a young 602 man lives in the same house as the wife of his father's younger brother. If these two lived in different houses the woman would be a potential spouse for the boy; he would call her *azong* and would have the right to sleep with her. But if they live in the same house he will call her 'mother' and, on account of the emotions of respect and incest surrounding the term, is meant to respect her. In Lingthem there were five or six young men in this situation, and I was not, in any of the cases, able to decide to my own satisfaction whether they did or did not sleep with their 'little mothers'. In the presence of other people they would always deny doing so, for they would be ashamed to say otherwise; three or four confessed privately to having done so, but all on later occasions tried to withdraw or modify their statement, saying for example that though they had slept together they had not done anything. Third parties would never speculate on such private behaviour; to direct questions they would reply with the catch-phrase 'Who can read what is in the heart of another?' Such behaviour, though

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sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off and I offer them *chi* and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower-bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel as though a heavy burden were pressing over my shoulders and as if my flesh were being poked with sticks—zinga—zinga—zinga—zinga—; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and walk outside in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put the necklace on me the gods would be angry and the rash man would receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody is hushed, even the children. I blow into each person's face and on the offerings; then I scatter *chi* and prophesy in a loud and audible voice the things which are going to take place in the following half-year. After the prophecy I recover consciousness but not till cock-crow the next day do I feel all right again.[5]

'When I am called in in the case of illness the god does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking the sick person either in the form of some animal or insect or person, depending on which devil it is; thus Lum dong *moong* appears as a pig, Sor *moong* as a dirty ragged old woman, Arot *moong* as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the corner of my eye; if I look directly there is nothing there. But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye; if they go away without eating anything the patient will recover quickly; but if they take food the patient will probably die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious.

'A Mun must on no account touch a human corpse; should he do so the god will depart and he will be very ill for two months and lamas have to perform ceremonies to cure him. This is the only occasion on which the spirit will leave a Mun. A dead Mun is buried in the ordinary way and his soul has to be conducted to the *rum lyang* (place of the gods) in the normal manner; the gods

[5] All Mun do this ceremony twice a year (no more and no less) but on different days; informants agree that their prophecies are never mutually contradictory; they are always fairly generalized.

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241 straw is placed on top of the big heap and on that three pieces of
782 charcoal and then the *tafoot* is put on top. Then all except Mayel-mu withdraw and look on from afar and Mayel-mu makes a fixed invocation starting 'To—burr, burr, burr; you different gods, we summoned you this morning to bring the rice which grows like a tree and the maize which grows like a tree from Mayel. If storms have destroyed and wasted our crops bring that grain back, if birds or rats have destroyed or wasted our crops bring that grain back, burr, burr, burr.' After this all present say, 'burr, burr, burr', and he too will withdraw and watch to see if the grains of rice roll down off the heap; if they do it is a good sign; if not it means that the harvest will not last long. Then the charcoal and *tafoot* are taken away and the big basket of Talyeu-mu is used as a measure for the grain. If all this has been done while the sun is still high each helper is given his wage of about 30 lbs. of rice and goes back to the owner's house. There they drink *chi* and sing, Talyeu-mu competing against the rest; she will sing summoning the people of Mayel and the others will reply impersonating the gods, saying
241 'No, we won't come', and mocking her. As much *chi* as people can
786 drink is given and everybody sleeps the night at the house.

If, however, the sun touches the hills before the rice is reaped another procedure is followed; the cut grain is covered with mats, a fireplace is set up and food cooked and the night is spent on the straw. On that night anybody may sleep with anyone else provided the rules of incest are not broken; and if a man should see his wife sleeping with another he must never refer to it, not even to his friends. There may only be two or three copulating couples, but it is better if there are more, for then Talyeu-Nimu and Sangvo-Nimu will be pleased at seeing so many people copulating and will send them a good harvest. If boys are too young to copulate they will just sleep with their friends. This ritual copulation is called *ʒo-tsom-thap* (pressing the rice; this is an elegant periphrasis for copulation). The rest of the rice is cut in the morning.

241 As soon as chi has been prepared the *lafèt* is offered with the new
782 *chi* to the people of Mayel and all the people pray, saying 'May these crops feed us long'. After the sacrifice all must eat the new rice together; should any one person eat before the others he would be ill.

241 Until everybody in the neighbourhood has performed the
784 sacrifice grain must not be dried in the sun, nor may people even

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

look at grain drying in the sun. Until that time grain must be dried over the fire; for if the gods of Mayel saw grain drying in the sun before they had been offered any they would be angry and would not come the next year and there would be a bad harvest. Until everybody has made the sacrifice people who go where they may see rice drying in the sun—across the river or to Mangan or Gangtok—must cover their face with a cloth. If a man who has not made his sacrifice were ordered by the Mandal to go abroad where he might see rice being dried, he would have a valid excuse for not going and a substitute would have to be found for him. Should a man by any chance see crops drying he would be considered to have *amik-her*, which is almost the evil eye; if a man with *amik-her* were to look on a field the people of Mayel would be terrified as if by an enemy and would run away and would not return next year. Therefore a man who has accidentally seen drying crops would live in the jungle or in a field-house or cardamum field until the rice of the neighbourhood was gathered; if he should be a person who would normally sacrifice he would not do so that year. To avoid this danger Lepchas who have to go to Mangan at the harvesting season only go at night so that they will see no drying crops. For a man with *amik-her* to look at the harvest would be *nam-toak*—a year of disaster—as bad as if incest had been committed. When people have performed their sacrifices they send and tell the Mandal who then sends the *gyapõn* round with the message that now all have sacrificed and crops can be dried in the sun. All the inhabitants of Lingthem, Panung, Liklyang and Salim have to wait till they get the message before they can expose crops. Should anybody expose his crops before all were ready the Mandal would fine him Rs. 15; but such a case has not occurred in the last twenty years, though some are known of earlier. Besides dry rice, maize and three varieties of millet cannot be exposed to the sun. This prohibition does not apply to the other sorts of millets nor to barley, buckwheat, and wet rice. Grains must also not be exposed until a sort of wild grass which grows on the far side of the Talung river has turned yellow.

The Lepchas of Zongu are very serious about this prohibition on seeing drying crops in the sun; it is a custom which has descended from the ancestors of our ancestors. 'The people outside Zongu say they don't care; "the grain is in the sun when it is on the stalk; what is the difference when it is cut?" they say; but we people in Zongu have always acted in this way.' For Lepchas

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

241 784 living outside the closed community the prohibition is impossible to observe; the Lepchas of Zongu are well aware that there are good harvests where this prohibition is disregarded; but they consider that were *they* to neglect it their harvests would be bad as they live nearer the people of Mayel.

241 The people who represent Mayel-mu and Talyeu-mu when reaping are not paid any special honours; they represent the gods but they are not considered to have anything divine about them during this representation. For other crops there are not any elaborate ceremonies. When buckwheat is ripe a little of it is offered in the householder's house to Konchen, with an offering of buckwheat *chi*. 'The people of Sandong make a buckwheat cake and offer it but we don't.' At the time of planting the wet rice a general ceremony is performed in which a chicken or a goat is offered and also a plate with *chimi*, etc., on it; 'terraced rice comes from Nepal so it isn't really necessary to give thanks, but here we live near Mayel and it is better to be careful.' When a field is cleared in the forest for the first time a chicken is offered for each member of the household and also a plate with *chimi*, etc., to keep away illness and predatory animals. This ceremony can be performed by anybody who knows how to do so.

iii

224 782 For the annual sacrifice to Moot *rum* Tseu, who is also called Pong *rum*, the popped corn and *chi*, if not prepared by a man, which is more desirable, must be prepared by a virgin girl. Pong *rum* together with his wife Shing *rum*, is the lord of all wild animals and the patron saint of hunters. Every year in October a joint sacrifice has to be made to him by all the hunters of the neighbourhood; the sacrifice consists of popped corn, *chi*, dried fish and bird, ginger, arum root, some other tuber, sugar cane, banana and wormwood flowers. If possible all the prepared ingredients should be made by a man and no woman must witness the sacrifice or even know when it has been performed. Pong *rum*, it will be remembered, is the guardian of the road to Mayel.

In the forest as soon as an animal has been killed and cut up a sacrifice must be made to Pong *rum*. Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in the front with a foreleg and hind leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all 'offered' to Pong *rum*, and

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the hunter crouching behind and speaking very slowly and softly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken that no woman sees the animal's head; if she did the hunter would have no success in future.

To know how to sacrifice to Pong *rum* it is necessary to learn how to, and to receive *loong*; for this purpose the novice goes to anybody who knows—maybe his father or some other relation or a friend—taking with him *chi* and a ceremonial scarf and a rupee. Great care must be taken that no woman is present at this time. When the older man sees the gifts he enquires what they are for and is told it is to learn how to sacrifice. The older man then arranges the sacrifice and tells the neophyte to sit with his back to him: he must not look but must listen most attentively. After that the neophyte on the next suitable occasion will make the sacrifice; the instructor will be near him and if he makes a mistake will nudge him, whereat the sacrifice must be stopped short. Subsequently the neophyte will take another lesson, continuing until he is word perfect and has received his *loong* and can sacrifice on his own.

A person who has once been to the communal sacrifice to Pong *rum* should continue to do so all his life; he may, however, give it up, in which case he is liable to be troubled with poltergeist manifestations by Pong *rum*, who anyhow if he is displeased with a hunter will pursue him whistling, and the thump of heavy stones falling will be heard, though no stones are seen to fall. It is even preferable for hunters' children to continue the ritual.

Kurma used to hunt but does so no longer and has given up going to the sacrifice to Pong *rum*; for he is afraid that should he go and then not hunt he would become mad. As things are he is somewhat persecuted by Pong *rum*; he describes these persecutions with the greatest detail and indifference. He says quite freely that he does not care a bit.

Near his house is an orange tree and some time ago on a moonlight night he heard distinctly the sound of big stones being thrown under this tree; but there was nothing to be seen so he knew it was Pong *rum*; he therefore returned to the house, lit some incense leaves and butter and came out and offered it to the god saying 'Please forgive us; we have no intention of hunting'.

'Only a month ago when some friends were in my house with me drinking *chi* I heard my dog which was tethered some way

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

When she has spent some years in any one rank she seems to take unto herself the next. Even the so-called Inebu Dorje-Lopön appears to have no authority over the others and, like them, her devotions are confined to the turning of wheels.

Inebus come to the monastery three times every month: on the eighth, fifteenth, and thirty-first (the day of full moon), according to the Tibetan calendar, which is in general use in this part of the world. On the nights preceding these three days the Inebu may not sleep with her husband, nor is she permitted to eat any meat. Of the ten Inebu in Lingtem six claim to be able to read; but in actual practice this does not amount to more than the ability to recognise the characters of the phrase *Om mani padme hum* when they are seen on a flag or cut in stone. The letters forming this sentence are so familiar that even quite small children are able to recognise them: the situation is almost exactly the same as the European child who soon learns to identify the cat in its first picture-book. This, however, is very far from the ability to read; but it is the stage beyond which most Inebu seem never to progress.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

possible*; and it might be a good thing to have a figure of a *Gedo* made and abandoned on the path. *Shemen Kyop* should certainly be done, in the near future, since this is clearly indicated. This consists in taking a picture of Tumsi and stuffing it inside the skull of a rat together with twelve small pieces of wood, to represent arrows, tied round it. This is then to be taken out and buried in the ground at the junction of two paths.

The following additional information was added for the benefit of Chano's child.

The child should not go to any house where people are quarrelling, and should particularly avoid places where corpses are being burnt: nor should she mix with people of low cast, such as Blacksmiths or Musicians! For the next few months she should also attend no wedding. She will be troubled by Mutnyam Chen, a demon which causes shooting pains, shortness of breath, and pains in the heart. The left shoulder will be particularly painful. She should not be present at the time cattle or bows and arrows are purchased; nor should she eat the flesh of any diseased animal. It would be better also not to allow her to play with knives. The reading of the following books will undoubtedly be beneficial: *Numchiya; Tukzung; Chozum; Numsa Numget; Chunjet*, and any others available.

The *Chenmo* ceremony also appears to be indicated, for which a bundle composed of a monkey's head, dog's head, and a piece of iron is necessary. The child will always be in some danger of dying, and the same may be said of its mother! At the present moment demons and gods are quarrelling amongst themselves for mastery of the child's body; and if the demons win she will surely die. For this reason good treatment is essential, or the child may suffer unnecessarily. If she lives until after November she will in

* The reading of books is very commonly prescribed, especially in Tibet. In order to get through the several bulky volumes within a reasonable time it is usual to call in a number of Lamas, each of whom reads aloud, but all at the same time, a different book or chapter for the benefit of the person concerned. This idea might well be incorporated into Western medicine: an order to read, for instance, the whole of *Chambers's Encyclopædia* might have a most salutary effect; provided, of course, that the patient did not hire others to do it for him!

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

House-building and general repairs are also carried out at these times.[1] Cardamoms are perennial and are planted in March and April, being grown from cuttings. The plants bear in the third year, and are at their best in the fourth, fifth, and sixth years, after which they are rooted up. If raised from seed the plants take from seven to eight years to mature. The fields have to be constantly weeded, especially at flowering time, since the flowers are close to the ground. When the cardamoms are gathered the flowered stem is removed, but the leaves are left intact.

I do not know when cardamoms were introduced into Sikkim, but Hooker, a most observant traveller, and a botanist moreover, makes no mention of them. Their cultivation, however, is now of great economic importance all over the State; but this aspect of the subject will be dealt with later.

It is believed in Jongu that cardamoms were introduced from Nepal, although I understand that the plant is not cultivated in that country; and certainly I have never seen it in such parts of Eastern Nepal as I have visited.

Menstruating women may not go near the cardamom plants, especially when they are in flower; nor should anyone who has used strong-smelling soap approach them, for this is offensive to the flowers. For the same reason the cardamom fields should never be used as latrines. It may be noted that all over Nepal menstruation is intimately connected with certain kinds of cultivation. A woman in this state may not, for instance, approach pumpkins, chillies, cucumbers, or egg-plants, or they will rot away: if they have only reached the flowering stage they will not set. It is thought that the smell of menstrual blood causes the damage, and that no harm will ensue if the woman thoroughly washes her body before going near the plants. Apart from this no one should point a finger at ripening pumpkins or cucumbers: nor should one talk loudly in their presence, or they will certainly rot away.

All these ideas are known to the people of Lingtem, and may possibly have been introduced by Tempa, who lived

[1] [i.e., during Oct., Nov. and Dec.--Analyst]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

early arrival of the monsoon drove us defeated from the slopes of Everest.

During the period in which it is wished to keep the rain away the Lama must have no connection with his wife; nor should he touch water, but must confine himself to *chi* or tea. There is no harm in looking upon water, but one should on no account wash in it. The area in which rain can be kept away is the whole extent of country visible from the place where the ceremony is being performed. Thus, although Talung is not visible from Lingtem, Tafoor can keep the rain away from that place because the hills above it are visible.

When Tafoor was learning his period of instruction was terminated by a ten-day fast in a completely dark room, into which he was sealed by his teacher. He felt very hungry for the first two days, but after this he had no particular desire for food. He was not even allowed to leave the room for the purposes of nature and remained sitting in the so-called "Lotus position" for the whole ten days, telling his beads and meditating. As soon as the fast was over he came straight out into the living-room and no arrangement was made to accustom his eyes gradually to the light. He was given a little weak tea and some thin gruel, but even this gave him intense pains in the stomach. On the second day he had a small amount of normal food, after which he resumed his ordinary diet.

In offering to stop the rain while I went up to Talung, Tafoor warned me that his efforts might be completely unsuccessful, for he says he can only do it when his mind is completely in accord with that of the person who wishes the rain kept away; otherwise it will rain harder than ever. He is quite unable to do it for his own brother, for instance: whenever Chodu asks him to keep the rain away, and he has tried many times, it rains as though the end of the world is approaching. But he has never yet had a failure when asked by the Mandal or his senior wife. With others it is possible to ease the rain off sufficiently to make work possible, but not to

3: Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Hunting and fishing among the Lepchas

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224 Hunting, which formed only a century ago a substantial part of the economy of the Lepchas[1] — the aboriginal inhabitants of the Himalayan State of Sikkim — is at present gradually decreasing in importance, in proportion with the development of agriculture and the breeding of cattle. Many of the Lepcha men still pursue hunting occasionally, but more in the way of a useful pastime and only a few professional hunters can be found nowadays.

223 224 262 The animals hunted are birds — only those, which do not feed on carrion and meat in general, being considered fit for consumption — hares, deer, musk deer, stags, bear and wild pigs. Some of these animals are hunted not only for their meat but also in order to obtain some parts of the body which are valued as medicines, e. g. the bile and liver of a bear, the bones of certain birds, etc. — Crows, rats and mice who attack the crops, are killed as well, but not eaten. Occasionally, a leopard or man-eating tiger is trapped, but their meat is not touched. The hunting of elephants and rhinos which was rather popular at one time, judging from the numerous accounts still circulating among the Lepchas, does not seem to be practised anymore.

784 177 224 A religious prohibition which is, however, not always strictly kept, exists against the killing, and especially the eating, of monkeys, who frequently invade the fields and cause considerable damage. No other *tabu* seems to exist, except the prohibition of killing a white

3:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1953)1953
AK5 Lepcha AK5

784 elephant, a custom having its origin in the Buddhist religion, which 177 began to spread among the Lepchas four centuries ago.[2] Otherwise, 224 all animals can be hunted at any time, except when having young.

411 The main weapon of a Lepcha hunter is the bow (*să lí*). It is always made of bamboo, with a string (*să lí grím*) made either of [283] the same material or from a nettle plant, called *kŭ ju*; the best bow-strings, however, are manufactured from the fibres of the *kă fit* tree. The bamboo, which is used for making the bow, has to be carefully selected. It should be cut at the height of the dry season (December—January) from a bamboo growing at a high altitude and in an open spot, where its stem has been frequently bent by the wind. Before using the new bow, it has to be smoked for some time and also later, the bow as well as the arrows rest always on a bamboo platform (*pün hróp*), which one finds in Lepcha houses suspended above the open hearth. The bow is kept released and is only spanned when it has to be used.

Arrows (*tsóng*) are made preferably of a reed (*mók tu*) or, less frequently, of bamboo. Normally three steering feathers (*tsóng ro*) — the feathers of a kite or duck being preferred — are set into cuts made previously in the reed and are afterwards glued and fastened with strings. A deep, square or oblong cut (*dem*) is made to receive the bow-string and, lastly, the portion of the reed holding the steering feathers is painted black. To some of the hunting arrows, however, no steering feathers are attached. The barbed arrow head (*tsóng thyak*) is made of iron; it possesses either a short conical metal tube, which receives the shaft or has a short iron rod, which is pushed into the shaft. In the latter case, the end of the shaft is then tightly bound with a string and impregnated with resin. Arrows used to scare away thieves, and the toy arrows of children, do not possess iron points but carry instead a short bamboo tube on the front of the shaft, to render the missile harmless.

411 Sometimes poisoned arrows are used for hunting and formerly also 278 for warfare. The poison most frequently applied for this purpose 224 is aconite (*pă kí*). An aconite root is kept ready by the hunter and

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

to an end by cutting his "thread of life".

There are however also some spirits, who guard people against the attacks of malignant demons. Among these benevolent supernatural beings, the *A bo a mo să rŭm*, who protect the family and who transfer their protective power from one generation to the other, and *Mŭn kung*, the guardian spirit of life, should be mentioned.

At the moment of death, soul and body, as the Lepchas believe, separate and the soul leaves its temporary abode. At first it lingers in the room for some time, watching the lifeless body. But later, feeling very light as it is not kept down anymore by the heavy human form, it leaves the room and strolls further and further away from the house. It goes now to all the places, which the deceased had visited during his lifetime, and it tries to speak to people it meets on the road, but nobody can hear or see the roaming soul. If no appropriate measures are taken, it might get friendly with the demons and induced by them, can return and start harming people. To prevent this, a *Bong thing* or *Mŭn*[12] have to be called, to say the necessary prayers and invocations. The prayers start with an admonition to the deceased to realize, that his life has now come to an end and that he is not among the living anymore.

When performing this rite or any other funeral ceremony, a *Mŭn* has to be very careful not to touch the corpse and also not to take any food in front of the dead, otherwise she would be afflicted by a severe illness. There are however no such restrictions for the *Bong thing*. If no Lepcha sorcerer is to be found in the neighbourhood, anybody who knows the necessary prayers may be called into the house. Also in case that a *Bong thing* or a *Mŭn* died, this rite has to be performed, only in a more elaborate manner.

Those funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas,[13] which had to be carried out at daytime, were called *Sŭng bam*, while those which took place at night were termed *Sŭng lyon*. The cost of these rites was considerable and thus it occured frequently that people had to sell or pawn some of the family property in order to fulfil their duty towards the dead.

When preparing the corpse for the funeral, all jewellery as earrings and rings had to be removed and then the body was washed with lukewarm water; to use cold water was not customary, as "during lifetime, one would also not offer cold water for washing". Later the body was smeared with some herbs and dressed in an old, but clean garment. To use a new, unworn dress is a custom, which came into vogue only in more recent times among well-to-do Lepcha families. At last the face of the dead was covered with a white cloth and a coin was placed

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life is of greater value than hers. Take it! The body and soul of the ox are greater than those of this person. Take them! Leave the people in peace." As he says this he offers chi, rice and butter, laying these three sacrificial gifts on the forehead of the animal. Then, he says with greater emphasis, "The body and the soul of this animal must be sacrificed." The ox is then killed by the blow of an axe on the nape of its neck. Any one except a woman, can perform the actual killing; for if a woman were to kill the animal it would be a terrible misfortune and no one would be allowed to eat the meat. The head of the ox is then severed from the body and the body is carved up. The legs are taken off, the entrails and the internal organs are drawn out, the head is taken off, the thorax is divided vertically into two, and the loins with the tail are dissected.

The first part of the sacrifice is performed in front of the house near the door. Except for the head, loins, tail and the entrails, the left side of the animal is sacrificed to the demons. From the more valuable parts, *e.g.* the heart, liver, spleen, kidneys and lungs, only very small pieces are taken away for the sacrifice to the demons. The Torma for about fourteen demons are placed on a little table; for Ge-be-mung, Techū-mung (the fever-demon), Tsang-dog-mung (the demon who causes stiffness in the limbs), Me-sun-mung (the life-spirit), Mŏg-nyan-mung, Ka-so-mu, Me-mu and others whose names we could not ascertain. It is believed that the demons are appeased through this sacrifice, that they leave the sick person and come no more into the house.

The second part of the sacrifice takes place inside the house. The right side of the animal together with the head, the more valuable parts, the entrails, the loins and the tail are ranged in the following manner: In the large room a little distance away from the fire place, the skin of the animal is spread on the floor with its hairy side down, and the tail end nearest the fire place. Over this the skull is laid at the head end, with the snout pointing to a little table which is placed against the wall opposite to the fireplace. A little behind the skull the fore and the hind legs are placed on the right and left side of it. In between the legs are laid the breast bones, the loins, the tail, entrails and the valuable parts. These cover

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776 But we fail to understand it. We are naked at the time of our birth. Now too we are naked. When time will
[761] cease for us, the time of our death, it is impossible to say. We cannot give any news of the land of the gods. And at the time God calls us, mother and father cannot call us back. When the day of death is at hand, neither elder brothers, sisters, children nor daughters-in-law can call us back. When the day of the Lord dawns, then indeed has death passed away."[886] The sacrificial texts quoted give us an idea of their vast varieties.

(i) Other Sacrifices

791 Although the Mun and the Bong-thing wield such a great
782 influence over and dominate the whole sacrificial organisation, there are all the same, some sacrifices which do not come within their sphere.

An old Lepcha said to us, "For our original sacrifice we, the Rong folk, offer the intoxicating drink Chi, in a wooden vessel together with rice and small dried birds on a banana leaf-plate. The Chi had to be prepared by a young girl who
● [781] was still a virgin. The little birds had to be shot by a young lad who had had no sexual relations with anyone. The

[539] ŋāc go yu ma dyak ne djek go rung a gūn do
But we do not understand it. At the time of our birth we are naked,

djek lo tang ha tsād ga la a gūn lo tang gūm
at present time we are also naked. When our time is over

amāk ta sut de dōn ma gūn
to tell the time of our death, that is not possible.

rum lyang ta sut ma gūn
To give news of the land of the gods is not possible.

rum nōng lo lek dō tsād ga abu amu lin ma gūn chiang chia
At the time when God calls us, father and mother cannot call us.

pe pū lad chiang gam anam anom ahōb anon
When the day of death is coming, elder brothers, elder sisters, children and

ayum li ma top ŋag ni rum ta ŋag ni tag nam che lat nan
daughter-in-law can no longer call us. When the day of God is coming, then is death passing away."

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sacrifice is called Rum-fat or Lyang-rum-fat. It is performed once a year in honour of Rum or Pum-thing-rum somewhere in December or January. The flesh of the little birds can be dispensed with at this sacrifice, but the rice and Chi are essential. Generally it is the master of the house who is also the family priest who performs the sacrifice, but it can be performed by anyone who understands the rites."[68]

Sam-sing from Maria-Basti has described to us the hunter's sacrifice in the following terms: "The Supreme God whom we honour originally was called Assal. We do not know any more where he lives, and so each tribe honours its own god of the hunters. In the Yok-song-mo tribe to which I belong we practise the cult of the Mut. For this we keep cocks. Whenever we go out a-hunting we take a cock and present it to the god of the hunters. After the hunt the cock is killed and sacrificed to the god, and its flesh is consumed by us.

A part of the game killed at every hunt has to be offered to Mut. We cut little pieces from each part of the body of the animal wrap them up in leaves and offer them up to the god. After the sacrifice has been offered we eat the meat ourselves. No woman is ever allowed to be present at the sacrifice to Mut." Another member of the Rong tribe called this god of the hunters by the name of Dju-thing. He honours him in the manner described above. He also stressed the fact that a woman is never allowed to take part in, nor even to look on, this sacrifice to the hunting god.

Gorer describes a sacrifice which all hunters offer together in the month of October, *viz.* the sacrifice to Mut-rum-Tseu or Pong-rum, the protector of wild animals and patron of hunters. The wife of this god is called Shing-rum. The sacrifice consists of roasted corn, chi, dried fish and birds, ginger, arum roots and a few other tubers, sugar-cane, banana, and worm-wood flowers. No woman is allowed to know what is being prepared. She is not allowed to come near. The presence of a woman who is having her menstrual period is regarded as particularly dangerous. Chi must be prepared by a virgin or she should at least pour it into a vessel. The birds must be procured by a chaste youth. If a deer has

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been killed, then it is imperative that a sacrifice to the hunting god must be performed. The animal is already carved up in the forest. To quote Gorer: "Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in front with a foreleg and third leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all offered to Pong-rum, and the hunter crouching behind and speaking very softly and slowly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken to see that no woman sees the animal's head; if she does, the hunter will have no success in future."[84]

The sacrifice of the hunters are a replica of the primitive sacrificial ceremonies. There is, however, a new element which comes to the forefront in the present sacrifices, *viz.* the strict exclusion of all women;—the women may not even be spectators, or even so much as see the head of the animal which has been killed and which is to serve as a victim at the sacrifice. The virginity of the youth and the maiden who prepare the sacrificial materials, is strongly emphasised. Such hunting sacrifices are well known among many primitive tribes in India, *e.g.* among the Irulas, Kurumbas, etc.

The Rong believe that the bow and arrow which they require for hunting are given to them by the deity, and that even the game is, so to say, given over to them by the deity. This enables us to get a better idea of the sacrifice to the god of the hunters. One of the legends recorded by Stocks runs as follows, "Once upon a time Tashey-thing made friends with Mon-tsu-mot, a wild she-boar whom he married and with whom he lived happily for ten years. Not far away from their home was a great rock hanging over a precipice where a rock bee (vot) had its hive, and Tashey-thing wished to bring the honey home one day himself. It was a very dangerous task to reach the rock even with the aid of a rope; and Tashey-thing, being helped by many animals and insects, made them all swear to hold the rope firmly and not to let it go. But his wife Mon-tsu-mot was not faithful, and wished to get rid of Tashey-thing.

84. op. cit. p. 244 sq.